

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6333

As of January 21, 2008

Title: An act relating to the creation of a citizens' work group on health care reform.

Brief Description: Establishing a citizens' work group on health care.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Marr and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/23/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: A variety of health reform proposals are under consideration across the country and in the state, ranging from reforming health care purchasing, expanding access to insurance products, redesigning insurance products to be more affordable, or providing universal coverage for all residents. Many states considering a range of reform efforts have formed commissions or citizen work groups for broad discussion of potential options.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Citizens' Work Group on Health Care is established. The Governor must appoint nine citizen members that include representatives from business, labor, health care providers, consumer groups, and experts in health care financing and health care ethics. The work group must hold meetings in all regions of the state to examine a range of health care proposals, and provide information describing underlying health care issues, the health care proposals under review, and principles guiding the evaluation of the proposals.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) must contract with a consultant to facilitate work group meetings and a consultant to complete an economic analysis of each of the proposals. Staff support is provided by OFM, other state agencies, and House and Senate staff.

At a minimum, the work group will consider the following proposals: a proposal to allow insurance carriers to offer products without many mandated benefits; a proposal to expand upon the Health Insurance Partnership created in RCW 70.47A with enrollment of individuals and large groups; a proposal to provide a guaranteed benefit plan with preventive and catastrophic coverage for all residents; and a proposal to cover all residents in a uniform benefits package available through carriers or networks, funded through a payroll assessment.

The work group must provide a summary report and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2008. The bill is null and void if funding is not provided in the state budget.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.